

**AGE REQUIREMENTS FOR CASH AND FOOD ASSISTANCE**

**Purpose:** This section explains the:

- Age and school requirements for a child to be eligible for TANF or SFA;
- Minimum age for a client to be eligible for GAU; and
- Definition of "elderly" for food assistance programs.

**WAC 388-404-0005 - How does a child's age and attendance in school affect their eligibility for TANF and SFA?**

- (1) To be eligible for temporary assistance for needy families (TANF) or state family assistance (SFA) , a child must be:
  - (a) Under age eighteen, or
  - (b) Under age nineteen, and participating full-time in a secondary school program or the same level of vocational or technical training.
    - (i) "Participating" means the educational or training institution finds that the child:
      - (A) Meets the school's attendance requirements; and
      - (B) Is making acceptable progress in finishing the program.
    - (ii) The educational or training institution sets the definition of "Full-time" attendance and the number of classes a child must take. .
    - (iii) A secondary education includes high school, a GED program, and state-approved home schools.
- (2) If a child age 18 or older has already met the requirements to finish the educational program, the child is no longer eligible for TANF or SFA.
- (3) If the child does not qualify for assistance under subsection (1) of this section, they may qualify for SFA if the child is under age twenty-one and:
  - (a) Gets an education due to their disability as stated in RCW 28A.155.020; or

- (b) Participates full-time in a secondary education program or an equal level of vocational training as defined in (1)(b) above.
- (4) If a child that gets SFA is age 19 or over, they are not eligible for family medical or SFA-related medical.

### CLARIFYING INFORMATION

#### 1. **When a child turns 18:**

- a. They must participate full-time in a secondary education program or an equal level of vocational training to be eligible for assistance.
- b. The child's eligibility for TANF/SFA ends on the last day of the month in which the child turns 18 if the child:
  - (1) Is not participating in their education on a full-time basis.
  - (2) Has met the basic requirements to complete the education or training program even if they haven't gone through the official graduation ceremony.

#### 2. **Needy caretaker relative a child receiving SSI:**

If the only child that meets the TANF/SFA age requirement gets SSI, the child's parent or needy caretaker relative can get TANF or SFA for their own needs as long as the child meets the requirements of WAC 388-404-0005.

#### 3. **Education:**

- a. If a child is on summer vacation, we count the child as participating if they:
  - (1) Didn't finish the basic requirements to complete the program; and
  - (2) Are enrolled or intend to enroll as a full-time student for the next academic year.
- b. If a nineteen or 20-year-old student attends only English as a Second Language classes or participates in non-state approved home schooling, as defined by RCW 28A 225.10(4), the student is not eligible for SFA.

- c. A child in special education meets the school's definition of disabled and the requirements of WAC 388-404-0005 (3) and is eligible for SFA.

See [VERIFICATION](#) for information on how to verify a child's age or school attendance.

See [TEEN PARENTS](#) for the school attendance requirements for TANF and SFA AUs that have an unmarried parent under the age of 18.

## **WORKER RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. ACES will generate an alert to notify the worker that a child is nearing their 18th birthday. Review the case record when you get the alert.
2. Verify the child's age, school attendance, and the date the child is expected to complete school as needed:
  - a. If the child will have their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday during a summer vacation month, contact the school before the end of the school year to find out when the child will complete the program. Update ACES based on the information provided by the school.
  - b. Verify that the child:
    - (1) Is in a program that will lead getting their diploma, GED, or equal level of vocational or technical training;
    - (2) Is making satisfactory progress toward completing the program; and
    - (3) Meets the institution's attendance requirements for a full-time student.
  - c. Set an alert in ACES to follow up with the school as needed if:
    - (1) The school is not certain about the date they expect the child to complete their education; or
    - (2) Based on case history, you expect the child may not participate through the entire review period.

3. Nineteen and 20-year-old students that get SFA cash aren't eligible for SFA-related medical or Family Medical. If an AU member age 18 or older is incapacitated, look at that client's eligibility for GAU:
  - a. If the child is incapacitated, offer to open GAU. GAU benefits include medical coverage. (See WAC 388-400-0025 for GAU eligibility requirements.)
  - b. If a 19 or 20-year-old incapacitated student is the only TANF/SFA eligible child, give the caretaker relative the choice of getting GAU for the child or SFA for both the child and themselves.
  - c. If the caretaker relative is incapacitated and there aren't any other TANF/SFA eligible children in the home:
    - (1) Offer to open GAU for the caretaker relative; and
    - (2) If the student is incapacitated, offer to open GAU for the student; or
    - (3) If the student is not incapacitated, offer to open SFA for the student.

## **ACES PROCEDURES**

1. **Student status:**
  - a. If the client attends a secondary or equal education program on a full-time basis, enter [FT] in the (Student Status) field of the client's (DEM2) screen.
  - b. If the client attends the program less than full time, enter [HT] for at least half time or [PT] for part-time as appropriate in the (Student Status) field of the client's (DEM2) screen.
  - c. If the client has either met the basic requirements to complete the education or training program or stopped attending the program, enter [NO] in the (Student Status) field on the client's (DEM2) screen.
2. **Education level:**

If the client is in a secondary education program or equal level of vocational or technical training, enter [HS] on the (Educ Level) field of the client's (ALAS) screen.

**3. School name:**

Enter the name of the client's school or training institution on the (School Name) field of the client's (ALAS) screen.

**4. Expected completion date:**

Enter the date the school expects the client to complete the educational program on the (HS Complete) field of the client's (ALAS) screen. If the client has met the basic requirements to finish the program, enter the date the client met the requirements.

**5. Special education / exception:**

Enter [Y] on the (Spcl Ed/Exception) field off the client's ALAS screen if the client:

- a. Participates full time at a secondary education program or an equal level of vocational or technical training; or
- b. Is in a special education program.

**WAC 388-404-0010 Age requirement for GA-U and ADATSA.**

To be eligible for general assistance - unemployable (GA-U) or the ADATSA program a person must be:

- (1) At least eighteen years of age or older; or
- (2) For GA-U only, if under eighteen years of age, a member of a married couple:
  - (a) Residing together, or
  - (b) Residing apart solely because a spouse is:
    - (i) On a visit of ninety days or less;
    - (ii) In a public or private institution;
    - (iii) Receiving care in a hospital, long-term care facility, or chemical dependency treatment facility; or

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| (iv) On active duty in the uniformed military services of the United States. |
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### CLARIFYING INFORMATION

Because state or federal law does not set the minimum age requirement for GAU, workers can request an Exception to Rule (ETR) if a client doesn't meet this requirement. See **EXCEPTION TO RULE**.

<b>WAC 388-404-0015 Definition of elderly person for food and cash assistance programs.</b>
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For food and cash assistance, " <b>elderly person</b> " means a person sixty years of age or older.
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### CLARIFYING INFORMATION

See WAC 388-408-0035 to decide if an elderly and disabled person can be in a separate food assistance unit.

See WAC 388-416-0005 to decide how long to certify an AU when all members are elderly.

See WAC 388-450-0190 for information on the food assistance shelter deduction for AUs with an elderly or disabled member.

See WAC 388-450-0200 to decide if an elderly food assistance client can have an income deduction for their out-of-pocket medical expenses over \$35.

See WAC 388-470-0005 for the maximum resource limit for AUs with an elderly member.